- Caster Marie

# THE CHRIST \*

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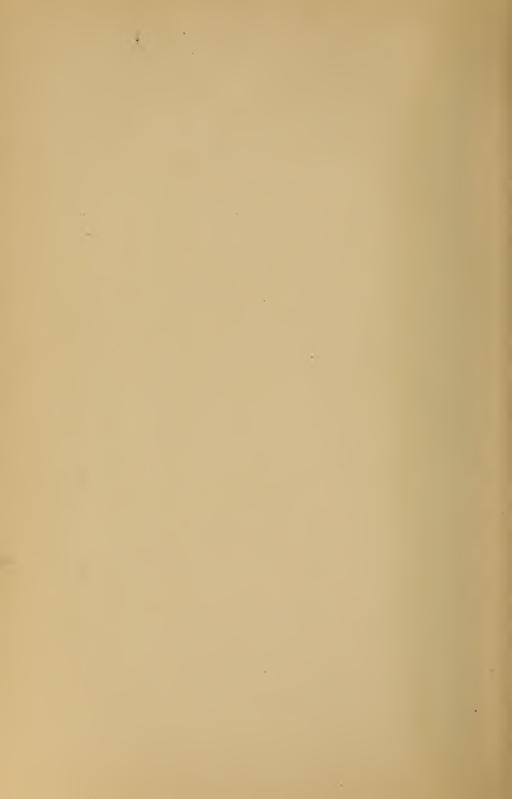
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MADONNA AND CHILD FROM THE PAINTING BY BODENHAUSEN

# THE CHRIST

A Poetical Study of His Life from Advent to Ascension

O. C. AURINGER

AND

J. OLIVER SMITH



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DEDICATED TO ALL WHO LOVE HIS NAME

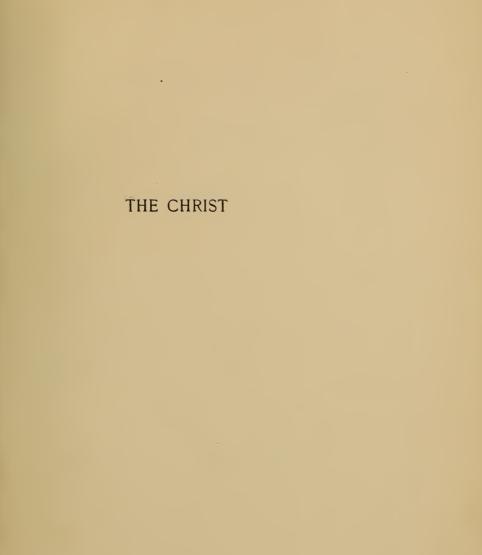


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# THE CHRIST.

#### PROLOGUE OF THE PROPHETS.

HEARD as if in sleep,

From out the severed gulfs of age and clime,

Borne through the solitudes of space sublime,

These prophet voices sweep.

With slow uncertain sounds,

Far sundered and dim issuing they began;

Till, gathering power and pace, they rose and ran
And filled that world's wide bounds;

As when from tow'r to tow'r

The fiery heralds speak throughout a land
The joyful tidings of the oppressor's hand
Relaxed, and sunk his power.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

<sup>&</sup>quot;And the Lord shall suddenly come to his temple.

Behold he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."

- "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."
- "And this is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness."
- "The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee."
- "And the Spirit of the Lord shall be upon him."
- "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."
- "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."
- "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."
- "For unto us a child is born, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace,"
- "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing."
- "In that day shall be a fountain opened to the house of David for sin and for uncleanness."

- "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising."
- "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed."
- "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."
- "Dogs have compassed me. The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me. They pierced my hands and my feet."
- "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced."
- "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."
- "After two days he will revive us and in the third day he will raise us up."
- "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."
- "Of the increase of his government there shall be no end."

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. His name shall endure for ever. All nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel. And blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen."

O. C. A.

#### THE ANNUNCIATION.

Alone,

And yet not lonely, for the soul that holds Close converse with the forms invisible, And dwells in sweet communion with the skies, Can never be without companionship.

Not lonely, for in every virgin heart The guest of Love claims undivided care, And barred is every gate but solitude.

For second only to the word of love Is memory of that word, and solitude Is but the portal to a fair new world Where Fancy holds a tryst with Memory, Both crowned with the aureola of Hope.

But lo, what meaneth this! the air is stirred
As by some nameless presence. Can it be
Angelic beings seek the earth once more
As in the ages past? Then angels came
And walked with men,—came not with sound of
wings

But seeming substance that no shadow cast, Unknown, unheralded, a presence felt Long ere defined, not floating into sight From distant clime, but "born where they appeared,"

As rays are flung upon the morning cloud.

How reverent now,
In speech and bearing, mighty Gabriel!
Six moons before, thou cam'st as evening fell,
To one who in the temple of the Lord
Was wont to minister in holy rites,
And placed the crown of Promise on his brow.

But thou, in might of vested Godlike power, Bade silence fall upon the doubter's tongue, These thy portentous words: "I, Gabriel, That stand in presence of the living God, Am sent to thee. Behold, thou shalt be dumb Until the day these things shall be performed, Because my message thou believest not."

But reverently is passed
The threshold of this Galilean home,
While footstep only heard in courts of heaven
Pauses before this wondering Jewish maid,
And lips that utter thrilling prophecies
Are with Divine Compassion strangely stirred,
And tremulous with human sympathy.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Hail, thou most highly favored!" Wondrous words,

<sup>&</sup>quot;Blessed art thou 'mong women, for the Lord Is with thee, thou hast favor found with Him."

Trembling the maiden stood, And wondered what this salutation meant. How often she had knelt before the Lord, And felt the wondrous Presence near, so near That if the veil of sense had passed away And left her with Jehovah face to face, Scarce had it seemed exceeding of belief.

But here a form in earth's habiliments, Yet like none earthly she had ever seen, A voice that said "Fear not," that spake her name, Yet with a music in its utterance Unknown in all the minstrelsies of earth.

But by that blessed "Mary" reassured, That name so long a household word in heaven, The message fell upon her listening ear And beating heart, nor did the angel chide When, startled into questioning, she sought To know a little of earth's mystery.

Well might it awe such high intelligence. God manifest in flesh, "The Wonderful," Laying aside the glory of the skies, For pain, reproach, and sorrow, pain that man Of nature less intense could never know!

"Fear not! Thou shalt conceive and bear a son, Jesus his name, son of the living God.
The throne of David shall to him be given
And of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Awed, Mary answered, "How shall these things be?"

How then didst thou, Ambassador from heaven, Receive the question, and relieve the doubt?—
By all that language could convey across
The gulf of Time which never yet was spanned,—
And then at length a reassuring word,
So sweetly human, that she might have sought
To step across this seeming spaceless gulf
'Twixt corporeity and spirit realm,
And pass at will beyond the mystic veil.

'T was the revealing of another's joy, The more than kinship of Elisabeth, Knit by similitude of circumstance And sweetest sisterhood of sympathy.

For who that once has stood with bated breath Upon the borders of that Wonderland Where Beulah plains lie near the gates of Death, But feels the isolation of the hour? Rare moments of anticipated bliss With their antithesis of sharpest pain, Heart-rapture voiced in an exultant song That circles back to sadness—back to tears. All this the waiting angel seemed to know As one to whom all secrets are revealed.

Then dimly as within a glass she saw The Saviour in the child, the Son of God, The King, the Prophet, and the Priest of men; And in the height of self-forgetfulness

Exclaimed, with rapture, "Be it as thou wilt,

Behold the handmaid of the Lord,

Be it according to thy word."

Oh for the pencil's power that might portray
Some vivid semblance of the wondrous scene:
Mary, the matchless, halo-crowned with hope,
Celestial light upon her cheek and brow,
And Gabriel, that light along his face,
Pausing before her with arrested wing,
His head bowed low before the bride of heaven.
But vain the seeking. Fancy folds her wings,
And all the glory-rays that greet us here,
Leave but an adumbration, halo-crowned.

# THE JOURNEY OF MARY TO THE HILL COUNTRY.

O ALL-TRANSFORMING love! What mother-heart

That hears the Angel of Annunciation say "Fear not," but fain would bid the Presence stay And something of Life's mystery impart.

Thus Mary, with clasped hands and parted lips, Looked up to see the angel vanishing. He who had spoken of this wondrous thing Had left her thrilled from foot to finger-tips.

Afar she sees the flash and shade of wings, That leave a path of glory as they fly. Then earthward turns, if haply to descry, The same sweet mystery in common things.

The bird sits waiting in its covert nest,
In silent joy.—Here nature's gift sublime
Of life's new birth, this miracle of time,
So old, so new, is wrought by heaven's behest.

Not vexed by thoughts of duty or design, This joyous life instinctive meets its plan, Without the "how" and "why" that restless man

Has sought to grasp, yet baffled must resign.

By Nature taught it goes its common way,
With songs and tender chirrup to its brood,
Seeking no heights nor depths not understood
By feathered sage, but hopeful day by day.

The Virgin lists and ponders in her heart
The thoughts she cannot speak to living friend,
And kneeling lowly where the branches bend,
She consecrates her life to heaven apart.

Through all the air there floats soft melody,

The winds careering through the fluttering vines

Just touch the loosened hair and smooth the lines

Which on the thoughtful brow unwonted lie.

Beside her blooms the rose, with lips aflame,
Its branches bend within her careless hold;
With petalled care the flowers their buds enfold—
Through all the realm of Nature 't is the same.

'T is love and life beyond our human ken;
One voice, one maxim, "Even as thou wilt."
'T is only art by artifice hath built
Such solid walls of doubt 'twixt God and men.

High o'er the vine-clad slopes of Galilee
The morning sun is speeding on its race,

The maiden's footsteps almost keeping pace, In haste the sister of her soul to see.

Long is the way, but with such lightsome feet

The leagues are passed, that flowers look up and
say,

Behold, what angel footstep passed this way, Did ye not see it in its swift retreat?

She lingers, resting on the trellised hills.

A soul that wakens under Nature's spell

Looks out from eyes where maiden raptures

dwell,

And joy of life her inmost being thrills.

Here walked the Angel of the Living God, And supped with Abram at the close of day; Manoah's fields in just such sunshine lay, When awed he listened to the angel's word.

'T was gentle Ruth came in these fields to glean;
Here David in his youthful prowess strong,
A champion great in war as great in song,
Dwelt, poet-prophet of the wide demesne.

Refreshed by waters of the limpid spring,
She passes on, and ere the day is done
She meets that sister-mother who has known
The joyous message she is fain to bring.

#### ELISABETH'S WELCOME.

BLESSED art thou, 'mong women, blessed be The holy child for whom the nation waits, Make haste, beloved, rest thee within my gates, The mother of my Lord hath come to me!

Oh, rare new joy, the pulsing hope, the fear, Like alternating shadows o'er the plain, Sun-rays of hope by storm-cloud overta'en, The smile, the sigh, the ecstasy, the tear!

How great the rapture of the Virgin's soul,
"Behold," she said, "the handmaid of the
Lord!

This human temple his divine abode, His will be done, supreme is his control."

#### ANTICIPATION.

#### Elisabeth.

COME follow me to where the willows brood, And we will talk of things scarce understood By those who ne'er have felt a beating heart So near their own, life of their life a part.

## Mary.

The nested birds their mother-joys express,
The whole earth sings a song of happiness.
The star-lambs fill the glorious fields above,
Their white-fleeced mothers guard with brooding love.

#### Elisabeth.

I feel the breath of evening soft and sweet Laden with airs from heaven with Love replete.

# Mary.

All Nature proffers peace to him who brings A heart responsive to her whisperings.

#### Elisabeth.

'T is true, 't is true! e'en now to you and me These drooping willows bend caressingly.

#### Mary.

See, how each larger leaf doth close enfold A tiny emerald in its heart of gold.

#### Elisabeth.

Strange that this boon should also come to me—So late, so longed for,—blessèd prophecy.

#### Mary.

Thy son, forerunner of another's birth, Whose welcome coming blesseth all the earth.

#### Elisabeth.

Did not the angel speak of loss and pain? This note, alas, runs through the prophet's strain.

### Mary.

Oh, hush! God's deep designs we may not know, Speak not this hour of sacrifice and woe.

#### Elisabeth.

Let gladness be our willing minister And leave all else to him who cannot err.

## Mary.

Yes, let us close our eyes to ill and gloom And let no messenger but Love find room.

#### Elisabeth.

Whence comes this natural lore, thy years so few? Wert thou heaven-taught? Did God thy mind imbue?

#### Mary.

A soul receptive, listening for God's thought In winds and waves and clouds,—by nature taught.

#### Elisabeth.

Speak to my soul and make the meaning clear. Why should the babe unborn be held so dear?

#### Mary.

Like flower to bud, Nature hath willed it so, 'T is Love alone that bids the heaven-life grow.

The birds that linger on that nested bough Are silent with the joy of motherhood.

The angels speak in language understood, And say: "Fear not, for God is with thee now."

#### SHEPHERD VOICES.

(ON THE PLAINS OF BETHLEHEM.)

(" Let all the angels of God worship him.")

#### First Voice.

MY heart is stirred within me as I trace
The Father's written sign
Of constancy upon yon starry space,
"Forever and for aye" they yonder shine.

#### Second Voice.

Nay, not forever, creatures they of time,
And not of endless years,—
Who heard the morning stars in song sublime
Shall hear the dirge of these supernal spheres.

#### Third Voice.

Yet not till these dim eyes shall see and know The glory of the Lord.

"A branch shall from the root of Jesse grow"— Behold the promise in our written Word.

#### First Voice.

Show us, O Master, tell the prophecies And make their meaning plain.

And as the mind with inward vision sees,
Our hearts with rapturous hope shall thrill again.

#### Third Voice.

I will, and those who thirst to know the truth Shall first the truth discern; so wisdom guides. 'T is fitting study neath these silent skies. See space-depths peopled with embodied thoughts, That ride at will upon their chariot clouds, That mount to yonder dome and touch the stars, That bow with reverence at Jehovah's throne And mingle with that angel brotherhood Who wait the signal for an embassy To this earth-isle as harbingers of joy.

Come, let us bow the knee! The hosts of God Are near, so near! They give the silence sound, They fill the vastness of immensity, Their white wings touch creation's utmost bound.

Ye know full well how once in ancient days The prophet saw the hidden heavenly host, In glittering armor, how all silently They led his scattering troops to victory.

#### Second Voice.

O God, anoint our eyes that we may see
The thousands and ten thousands as did he.
My soul is awed within me as I hear
Thy wondrous thought,—that heaven may be so
near.

#### Third Voice.

Nay, fear not, 't is a very slender veil Divides the world of spirit from the real, And through this veil God speaks prophetic words; Give ear while these I render reverently.

#### Both Voices.

We will. The hills, the trees, the clinging vines, The sun, the stars, all speak his great designs.

## Third Voice. (Reads by the moon's light.)

- "There shall come a star out of Jacob and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel."
- "The sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings."
- "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."
- "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."

#### First Voice.

But why, O Master, if he be a king, Why all the prophecies of minor strain That point to bleeding and to sacrifice?

#### Third Voice.

Because, by blood alone remission comes, A Priest, a holy Saviour and a King, And still a voluntary sacrifice.

#### Both Voices.

But when, O Master, when shall these things be?

#### Third Voice.

Behold the time is even now at hand.

A Virgin shall conceive and bear a son
And thou shalt call his name Immanuel
And he shall save the people from their sins.
And Bethlehem his promised natal home,
Thou least of Juda's thousands, yet so great,
For thou shalt bear the ruler of the world!

Behold, behold, the glory in the air!
The very door of heaven is thrown ajar,
And hither comes a winged messenger,—
I tremble! 't is the Angel of the Lord!

#### Gabriel.

Fear not! I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory!

#### Earth Voices.

What meaneth this transcendant melody?

#### Gabriel.

These are the angel choristers of heaven. And ye shall join with all the sons of God In praises of Jehovah's gift to men.

#### ANGEL CHORISTERS.

THREE angels held the glittering star And sailed the ether through,— Earth-spirits viewed it from afar That gem in midnight's blue.

FAITH pointed to the manger bed
Among the lowing kine,
HOPE downward gazed and onward led
To clasp the babe divine.

But Love, the foremost of the three, Held high her starry crown While that transcendant melody Through darkness floated down,—

Song that from Amphion lyre might spring, So wondrous sweet it fell, While sailing near on zephyr's wing, Their rapture-songs to tell.

'T was Peace on earth, Good will to man, On this "earth's bridal morn," From arch to arch the tidings ran, THE CHRIST OF GOD IS BORN!

#### THE MANGER.

I N sandals of silence and turban of blue,
Wild glancing with jewels the midnight came
through

By the way of the desert, attended with streams
Of the lances of moonshine and shadows and
dreams.

And he came where the dwellings of Bethlehem lay On the hillside, and halted his mystic array,

And the mist-tents were pitched, and the spears drawn around

Where a slumbering inn by the wayside was found.

Then an angel came down from the sky in a flame, And the bright spears gave back for his steps as he came,

And he passed to the door of a low-lying shed, Where the laboring cattle were sheltered and fed.

And he breathed on the place and fled back as he came,

And the bright spears gave way for the feet of the flame;

So he passed, and the humble ones saw not the sign

Who were gathered that night round that birth-bed divine.

But the sound of a murmur, the voice of a cry, Filled their ears while they lingered expectantly by, And their hearts and their sinews were wax at the sound,

And they worshipped, scarce wisting, bowed low to the ground.

Then they rose, and with Joseph and Mary as one Rejoiced at the birth of the marvellous Son:

And the host of the night with its spears had withdrawn

When they walked forth in gladness in Bethlehem's dawn.

At the voice of the God-child they worshipped that night

Though they knew not, compelled by an angel of might;

At the voice of the God-man we worship to-day,— The hosts that his spirit has moulded as clay.

'T is the voice that shall summon the quick and the dead

At his coming in glory, when earth-scenes are sped;

'T is the voice we shall hear when he gathers his own,

The ripe sheaves of time, to his garner and throne.

But here on our journey 'twixt cradle and throne, Oh, the manger, the manger, the manger 's our own! And the light of its story and glory shall cheer These hearts—human hearts—till our Shiloh appear.

O. C. A.

#### MOTHERHOOD.

What rapture must have lingered in thy kiss
In other hearts this wakeful ecstasy
Doth thrill each sense with an absorbing bliss.
Didst see the aureole about his head?
Or didst thou shudder as the thorny crown
Of future weaving cast its shadow down,—
Light-footed joy by sorrow over-sped?
Didst worship with them as they bent the knee
Beside thy lowly couch to crown him king?—
Yet trembled not at Love's idolatry
When angels came his cradle-song to sing?
No wrong for thee to worship at his shrine,
For he was God, oh, mystery divine!

#### WITH THE DOCTORS.

WITHOUT, the temple basked in heat,
But in the court the airs were cool,
And there from out the city street,
With stir of robes and tread of feet
Gathered the Rabbins' sacred school.

A hollow court piled round with shade
Of that great temple-dream divine,
It slept, with cooling marble laid,
A place for contemplation made,
A quiet harbor and a shrine.

There came grave teachers frosted white With rime of years, and faces pale, But eyes still bright with learning's light; And youth, with crispèd locks like night, Or fair, with ruddy looks and hale.

Old lions, warders of the law,
Amid their young couched or reclined,
Who out of sacred rolls, with awe,
Taught "Thus said God," but feebly saw
The spirit in the text enshrined.

But 'mid the grayness of the place
To-day had sunshine entered there;
Each Rabbin felt—but could not trace—
A presence fine, a warmth, a grace,
Unwonted in that straitened air.

Then rose a scribe with frosted poll,
And read in measured tones and high,
Emotionless, from out a roll,
Things fiery from a prophet's soul,
Then ceased and laid the parchment by.

Then stood a man of restless mood, And tongue of golden eloquence, In pictured phrases, apt and good, Interpreting to that young brood The Scripture's high significance;

And sat; and followed thence the hour Of wonted question and reply. What wingèd thoughts and subtle power! But not a breath from love's deep bower Blew there to melt and sanctify.

Till one hoar Rabbin closed his roll,
And slowly rose and looked around,—
"Of all that's written this the whole:
Man's only welfare, life and soul,
In strict obedience is found.

"Such is the law." And one, a youth,
With voice most like an angel's song,
And eyes of light and brow of truth,
Replied: "Nay, Rabbi; but in sooth,
Is it not love that slays the wrong?"

Into the grayness of the place

The beam had flashed its message fair;
A flood of warmth and cheer and grace
Bathed all, and mellowed o'er each face
Of those grave Rabbins gathered there.

And some perchance sat there that day
Who after sought that light and found,
In him who cried, "I am the way,
The truth, the life!" and blessed the ray
And followed it the world around.

O. C. A.

## HOW IS IT THAT YE SOUGHT ME?

Strange silence keeps the Word On that which lies so near the mother-heart,—That first decade of earth-life for the Son, His boyhood, his development of soul, From cradle up to manhood's proud estate.

Was he a loving, a responsive babe,
Was he a boy knight, righting every wrong?
He who has been portrayed by reverent pens
Through all the centuries' art and poetry,—
The Child and the Madonna, beautiful
With every human and angelic grace,
And always in such close companionship,
As if the love were more than human thought
Could fathom or portray.

But once, just once In passing view we see the boy of twelve Discoursing with the Doctors, heavenly wise, And they spellbound, entrancèd listeners.

What meaning in his answer, while, alarmed, The Mother urged her sweet solicitude—

"How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not
That I must be about my Father's business?" Here
A flash which shows how he had fondly hoped
That she of all the world would understand,
For earnest converse they had ever held,
Discoursing past and future, pained with all
The sad, discordant music of the world.

When the prophetic instinct touched his soul, With marvellous distinctness he had traced Those lines as sun-rays centred all in him, And at her knee in listening wonder learned The story of his birth so heralded By angel music and by hovering star.

And as he grew in winsome perfectness He may have told her that to him was given The power to lift those strains of misery Into the realm of joy unspeakable, By means of his divine humanity.

But even though she thought of Gabriel's words And of the wise men at that manger bed, And traced those startling lines of prophecy, She could not see him halo-crowned the while; He, thoughtful, docile and obedient, Self-abnegating, strong, yet gentle too, And subject always to parental will—How could they see the God in him or know How that God-love would fill immensity?

"How is it that ye sought me?"
She pondered all those sayings in her heart;
His "wist ye not" of sad reproachfulness,
Then quick excusing, for how could she know
Aught save the love that swept her to his heights
And brought the soul-seen nimbus to her brow?

If for a moment he was made to feel His utter earthly loneliness, the dearth Of comprehensive perfect sympathy, No word reproachful from his lips or hers; Forbearance mutual, and fellowship, The wonder-worship growing in her heart, To see the flower of sweet obedience Burst into bloom beside their homely way.

"He grew in favor both with God and man."

J. O. S.

# THE DESCENT OF THE DOVE.

THAT bright baptismal morn

Came winged and vocal with mysterious sounds,

For here was worship-thought so deep, intense, That clothed with strange, magnetic fire there came

The Holy Spirit visible to man,
In fairest, unobtrusive, dove-like form;
That Spirit who is hid from eyes of flesh
Save when that flesh, all dominate by soul,
Mounts up etherealized and sees strange things
Not dreamed of in the common hours of life,
But present in soul-transport such as this.

And now those words of pure and reverent love,
Strong in their trust and inborn loyalty,
When he is seen approaching with the rest,
And John discovers him with glad surprise,—
"Lo, I have need to be baptized of thee,
And comest thou to me?"
Here, flashing out as from a summer cloud,—
That cloud of silence and obscurity
Which like a veil o'er all his early years
Had hid the boy, the man, through toiling days,—

Here stands he now revealed. So great, so true, In all his cousinly companionships,
Those tests, those surest tests of character,
That even John is filled with reverent awe,
And says, with tender lips and heart aglow:
"Lo, I have need to be baptized of thee,
And comest thou to me?"

Now all the multitude were awed to see
Heaven's dove descend on that anointed head,
While voices in the air named him divine,
And well beloved of God. And John, who knew
That Messianic secret from his youth
(Though oft forgot in boyish thoughtlessness
And dimmed by nearness of relationship),
Proclaimed it to the people and baptized
Upon the bank. That supple neck was bent
Among the rest the symbol to receive,
And hearts were thrilled to see the snow-white
dove,

And hear the voice, "This my beloved Son!"

What twofold meaning for the Son of Man This rite, this consecration?—crystal drops To symbolize the baptism of the earth With all its tears, its rain of tears and blood, While hovered over him the holy dove To symbolize the baptism of the heavens—That holier baptism where white-winged peace,

Breathed by the Spirit on his sacred head,
A dove-like presence hovering undismayed,
As earth and heaven clasped hands for this brief
space,

And banished dark Despair to his own realm.

#### THE TEMPTATION.

ROM lonely contemplation of the theme
Of Christ and his temptation on the mount,
And all its gracious issues to our race,
Swimming toward sleep at midnight, suddenly
A presence stood beside my couch and spake.

Two spirits strive for empire of the earth,
Two spirits struggle in the breast of man,—
The spirit of ambition and desire
(Blood-born is he and flushed with carnal heat),
The spirit of true faith and abstinence
(Clear as the sun without a shade is he).
'T was these that on the Quarantanian mount
Launched sheer toward heaven a cloud that moves
not yet,

After long world-length conflict, closed at last In that gigantic strife that shook the worlds, While spirits and men and angels hung with awe Upon its issue, victory or defeat To him who bore the sword for this spent world.

I who am spirit now was then a man, A wily Arab wandering with my tribe, Subsisting in the desert lawlessly, Robbers of men and time.

A league away From you gray pile of everlasting rock, Called by our tribe The Prophet, there our camp Lay pitched that day beneath the sun's wide glare, Amid the omnipresent desert wastes, And few men stirred abroad. The dogs lay still. Lolling within the shadow of the tents; The voices of the children meanwhile came Languidly from within, like voices speaking Remotely out of dreamland; and the tents Sagged lifeless all around their dusky cirque, Whose every rope shone burnished in the glare, And every tent-pin. In the palm grove nigh, Holding a ghost of coolness, stamped the beasts, To start the swarm of pests that drove them mad With merciless maraudings on their flanks; Scattered beneath the trees men lounged in groups Or slept amid their gear; and all was still.

About the middle hour of afternoon
Along the way that led from Jordan forth,
Touching our camp, and onward so to the hills,
A stranger moved, unarmed. He seemed a youth
Of Israel's men, of whom some passed that way
In those strange days, from baptism of their John,
That great voice crying in the wilderness,
"Repent ye, for God's kingdom is at hand!"

Tall was the youth like some young palm, and fair As Huleh's gorgeous lilies where they wave And dream among the meads. And as he passed The men aroused, and some—the fiercest—glared Upon him muttering, but let him pass, O'erawed in their wild souls they knew not why. And thus unto the hills he held his way, Till, dwindled to a far uncertainty Upon the glimmering plain, the mighty shadow Outstretched of that fierce rock caught him from sight.

And thence began to work that holy wine
Of miracle, that after stung all veins,
Lightened in every heart, and flushed all eyes
With wonders—wonders hailed in both God's
worlds.

And on another morn our tents were struck,
And following in the footsteps of that form
We pitched within the shadow of the rock,
Grateful to man and beast. There, too, some palms
Offered their stately welcome from the sun;
So hospitably entreated noon and eve,
Alternately in tents of rock and leaf,
We rested well content. And from that day
Through forty desert suns great things befel
Of unaccustomed wonder, now with time
Become the common treasures of the world.

I know not whether any save myself Beheld aught strange. The mass of men are dull Of finer apprehension. I was one Given from my youth to visions and to dreams, And vague illuminations day or night, And deep, unearthly voices heard within. God touches with his splendor but few eyes, And mine were of them. But my fellows saw not, Or seeing noted not-dark to those signs. I, sitting in my tent door in the cool Of eve, upon the passing of the sun, Lifted my eyes by chance upon that crag, And saw what seemed to be a monstrous veil Of wind-blown drapery descend from heaven Around the mountain, like the wizard's tent, All of ethereal texture wove. The mount Betrayed its giant outline through its web, But not a crag or gulf. And there it hung-Day after day, day after day it hung; Rising at morning I beheld it there, Resting at evening I beheld it still, And still it hovered in the breathless air Of the desert, while the days burned slow with fire From unabating suns. Men named it cloud Who saw not with the visionary eye, But unto one enlightened 't was a veil Hiding some awful mystery behind. And oft in deepest starlight from within, Yea, often long into the splendid night, There came the voice of beasts unto my ears,— Deep roars beneath in lordly lion tones, Answered from higher up by shrilling cries Pealing far off in darkness. And again,

From farther off sole wailings desolate, Of anger or of terror, pierced the night.

For nine-and-thirty days within my sight That veil hung unremoved. As many nights Sounded the voice of beasts from out the mount. But on the fortieth day toward eve there passed Another lonely stranger by our camp, Speeding with eager sandals toward the mount, That goal of sudden pilgrims. Tall was he And shrunken like a withered palm, and grim As Damur's raven shadowing the sands By evil driven abroad. I cannot say Aught more of his resemblance; 't was his eyes That most I saw, and they were terrible,— The look they turned on me 't was not of man-Its horror thrills me yet. He passed and brake The veil of shadows compassing the mount, And entered as a conqueror to his tent.

That night was heard no beast within the hill,
But in the first watch of the night a shaft
Of God's sharp fire lit on The Prophet's head,
And after forty days of brooding spake
His voice and prophesied in fire and storm,
And blackness and confusion smote the world.
Earth reeked beneath, the sky howled overhead,
In streams of roaring rain and rushing wind,
Bolt after bolt fell sparkling, and the thunder
Ran rattling down the sounding halls of night;

And all the people fled into their tents,
Some sullen, some with trembling, all with awe.
And half the night, except for intervals
Of blackest hush, the tempest scourged the land,
While the mad stream ran frothing with great
bounds

Into the darkness headlong. But ere morn
The scourge moved on; and through the bright, hot
day,

Hushed to a breath, that awe of cloud still hung Intense about the crag, and never moved. But all that day within my blood I felt A deep disturbance. Thrills of good and ill Alternately possessed my trembling soul, High tides of exultation, ecstasy, Old desolations from the dusk of time, And gross abasements—princedoms, poverties, Purple and rags of spirit clanged within. My body wandered restless through the camp, Where all alike were restless, men and wives, Children and dogs-but none so moved as I. And even the tethered beasts beneath the palms.— Some spirit plagued them too, to champ and shift. But in mid-afternoon there came a change: Cool winds began to blow along the plain, The veil that hid the crag began to stir, Swayed as a tent sways smitten by the wind, Then broke into a thousand wreaths and curls. And vanished like a flock of doves in air, Showing The Prophet's figure with the sun

Set like a flaming jewel on his crown,
Gilding his ancient wrinkles. Then, while blew
A sweet breath bearing freedom through each soul,
And while the birds sang as in paradise,
And while the stream ran flashing through the
sands,

From out the crag's vast shadow stepped a form, Gliding with stealthy sandals from the mount,—
The same that yesterday had passed that way—
The same, but now how changed! Sunk that proud port,

Gone all that high-flown pride and confidence, Majestic in malign obscurity,— A spirit baffled, beaten and o'erthrown, Stealing from off the scene of dire defeat,-Yea, was he changed! even to those terrible eyes, One seven times now more evil—eyes of serpent, Broken but not destroyed. Oh, poisonous orbs, O'ercharged with evil promise for mankind! And all that night a calm and gracious light Played o'er those hills and sanctified each crag And lonely hollow with its sacred beams: And lesser lights all night went to and fro, Ascending and descending; while sweet sounds, Dearer than voice of breezes through the palms, Came faintly from above. And I was smitten In spirit with a joy before unknown: And I was lifted up and prophesied Of things I knew not. And from that day forth, Moved as the Phantom spake, my tongue was heard In prophecy of things unknown and known,— Sometimes 'mong men, sometimes 'mid palms and springs

And hills and lonely deserts where I roved,
Loyal forever to that sovereign Light
That caught me from the lonesome tracts of death,
Whence I became the prophet of the wastes,
Baptized and girded, with wild heart and tongue
Preaching the triumph of the Christ of God
Over the tents of Evil on that mount—
Wherefrom men take new courage and fight on,
Foreseeing Satan spoiled, his empire sunk,
His planet like the lightning fallen from heaven,
And earth's first monarch regnant in the earth.

I am a spirit now; my way hath been
An age among the happy tribes of heaven;
But see with what strong magic even now,
That last sweet passion of my earthly years
To teach men my great story, sends me forth
To tell it here at midnight in thine ear
With the old speech and rapture. . . . But I
hear,

Far off and faint, one calling, and I go
Where bloom the thirstless plains of heaven—
Farewell.

O. C. A.

## FOLLOW ME.

W HAT power in that divine command
That all the twelve, obeying,
Arose as one with clasp of hand
For service—an unselfish band,
No vain regret delaying.

And how he loved them every one,
Their human needs excusing,
Gently or strongly leading on
That upward, sunward path where shone
Heaven's virtues for their choosing.

That there was one whose sordid aim,
Whose doubt and stern denial,
Should one day his forbearance claim,
Brought neither banishment nor blame—
Far hence his hour of trial.

#### MOUNTAIN HEIGHTS.

("He went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him.")

STILL more and more the thought within me grows,

That on this mount the Christly spirit rose On wings of thought above earth's toil and stress To his own heaven of perfect holiness.

And yet so full of sympathy divine
For all our human faults, that line on line
He gave for guidance in those forceful strains
Which pierced the world's heart with repentant
pains.

And now, who reads the "Blessèds" can but feel That here is balm our deepest wrongs to heal; Who all those strong persuasions hears and heeds Finds help beyond his ken for hourly needs.

Upon that soul no evil thought intrudes Who daily dwells with these beatitudes, And he who holds this altruistic plan Grows to the stature of the perfect man.

## LILY OF THE VALLEY.

("Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.")

H E looked on thee,
Upon thy swaying bells

Down-drooping low,
And saw the tint of shells

Flush o'er thy petal's snow;

Then flashed the simile
Which age on age has made thee, Lily fair,
Sweet symbol of our Father's thought and care.

J. O. S.

# LESSON OF THE SPARROW.

("Are ye not of more value than many sparrows?")

BROWN little bird, so watchful and intent,
Seeking thy crumb-loaf for thy tender brood,
No awe of him who held the multitude
Where the o'er-arching skies above them bent.

But thou, brown wingling, gav'st a text that morn Which thousand eager tongues have amplified:
As thou dost for thy tender young provide,
E'en so our Father,—Let not Doubt be born.

# THE FIRST MIRACLE.

THE wedding feast is spread,
And messengers have sped,
Along the highway, through the village street,
To bid the guests, kinsmen and friends, to meet.

But lo, what oversight!
Where is the heart's delight,
Which opes the lips and makes the cheek to glow,—
The sparkling wine which should in plenty flow?

Flushed with expectancy,
Came Mary then to see
Her royal son,—if he their straits should know
His power could make the ruby liquid flow.

"They have no wine!"
Surely his power divine
Could rectify this wrong. 'T was not, "Ye must,"
Yet in her eyes he read sublimest trust.

Did he rebuke her then,
What time he turned again
And spake that quick, electrifying word,
Which well she understood?—With soul so stirred

To depths profound He looked upon the ground, And then those words, of modest grace the sum, "Woman! Know thou, mine hour is not yet come."

Woman, that sweetest word Which mother-heart e'er heard, Combining all of love and tenderness, No breath of censure but a lip's caress.

With voice of firm command She bade the servants stand And do his bidding; then, without a word They knew their Master and his power adored.

Then, without word or sign, The water turned to wine; The wine blushed red within the circling cup, While mortals with their God were called to sup.

#### THE LEPERS.

N INE dying men of Israel's clan, And one despised Samaritan, Ten lepers we, outcast of man, Unclean, unclean, unclean!

By misery together thrown, Loathed and self-loathing and alone, We lived to hear each other groan— Unclean, unclean, unclean!

Homeless and friendless all! To lie In summer 'neath the open sky, In winter 'midst the lazar's sty, Oh, mournfully unclean!

To feel no hope from day to day, To lie, to rise, in deep dismay, And breathing, slowly rot away, Unclean, unclean, unclean!

Poor dying men that could not die, Oh, ghastly spectres to men's eye, Far off to stand and piteous cry, Unclean, unclean, unclean! Such we, when the new prophet's fame Round Israel's borders ran like flame, Who forth from God with wonders came, To make the unclean clean.

Amid our groanings oft we spoke Together, till our hope awoke,— May he not ease our bitter yoke, Who pity hath on helpless folk, Even us, tho' thus unclean?

At first in whispers; but anon
Our hope a braver mood took on,
Till faith a heavenly height had won
Toward him, to make us clean.

Till, on a day into our ear
A spirit spake, distinct and clear:
"To-day the Healer passeth near,
Rise, go, and be ye clean!"

With hearts on fire we ran, and stood Over against a multitude, Poured through a highway fair and good, That ran fresh fields between.

The one that went before them bore That port the ancient prophets wore, Fair locks behind, and beard before, And calm and gracious mien. Then spake the Spirit in our ear:
"Behold, the Christ of God draws near!
Watch when he passes, stand ye here,
And cry, 'Lord, make us clean!'"

And we, obedient, standing thus, Our piteous voices raised: "Jesus, Master, be merciful to us, And make our foulness clean!"

He heard, he paused, he turned deep eyes A-dream with hoarded mysteries
A moment on our ghastly guise
With contemplative mien.

Then said—the voice with which he spake Was musical as winds that wake,
And all the lively branches shake
Of fig trees blowing green—

"Go shew yourselves unto the priest,"
Nor spake he aught beside, but ceased;
But oh, the music!—what a feast
To such starved souls and lean!

And while we went at his command, A spell came o'er me, warm and bland; I felt the power, I knew the hand, That made my body clean.

Then all at once that company Cried one to other wonderingly,— "O brother! how is it with thee?

Behold, I'm clean! I'm clean!"

And while our spirit in us burned, With strong desire my bosom yearned, And something smote me, and I turned 'Twixt pain and rapture keen,

And ran, with scarce a will or choice, With melting heart, but mighty voice, Crying: "Praise God! O Soul rejoice In him who makes thee clean!"

And came and fell before his feet
With melted heart and rapture sweet,
And gave him thanks and worship meet,
Whose grace had made us clean.

His voice like balm flowed o'er my head—Balm somewhat sorrowfully shed—As to the multitude he said:

"Were there not ten made clean?

"Where are the nine? Behold him lie, Of all those dead men ye heard cry, Alone returned to glorify God, who hath made him clean.

"Thou stranger, rise and go thy way,
Thy faith hath made thee whole this day;
Whole went I forth, yea even as they
In Israel thus made clean."

O. C. A.

# HE WROTE UPON THE GROUND.

WHAT wrote he there?
Sages have asked and scholars sought to know

And painters reproduced the fancied words
So long since swept away by sands of time,
But not obliterate, for woman's lore
Has this strange act interpreted, and read
His meaning, beautiful and delicate,
Angelic in his sensibility.
It was not what he wrote, but what he felt
Of sweet compassion for wronged womanhood;
He would not shame her by a single glance
Before that ruffian-souled accusing horde.

She stood before him with her downcast eyes,
Lips parted for one word in self-defence
If her weak voice might rise above the din;
But awed to silence by his majesty
She stood and gazed, drawn upward by his strength
Into an atmosphere of purity
That thrilled the while it pacified her soul,
And told her that his verdict would be just,—
Both just and kind, she knew it must be so.

They waited, watching with their glare intent To tangle him in disquisitious strife, And force his lips to say that law should slay By direful, brutal, death-compelling blows,— Wondering abashed why he had lowly stooped To write upon the ground. Did he not hear?— So filled with that sublime indifference!

His motive, far beyond their guilty minds,
Appealed alone to her who trembling stood
Waiting in silence for his final word,—
Unable to escape from their foul cries
And ribald speech and coarse accusing tongues,
Yet in their presence not a single glance
To bid shame's crimson flame up in her cheeks.

"Whoso among you is without all sin,
Cast the first stone." Then stooped again and
wrote.

He quelled them by the fiat of his power And by that all-compelling conscience stroke, Till all had slunk away beneath that lash And left them there alone. He wrote no more, But stood before her in his majesty With that divine compassion in his glance. She saw that he was God,—no human judge, On some false accusation prone to act, By stony glare to chill and petrify Until her very heart to stone should turn, Lest iron code, Mosaic, hurl to death.

By right of his great-souled humanity
He was impelled to write upon the ground,
That he might give no glance to disconcert,
Might speak no word to aggravate her pain
While she was glared at by those fiends of hell.

But yet, when all had vanished one by one, He read the tumult of her sorrowing heart, And asked at length where her accusers were.

"Hath no man thee condemned?" he gently asked,

And then with sinking heart she faltered, "No."
"Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more!"

What wonder that through all his public years She was his humble follower afar,
Her grateful heart with love and worship filled;
Or that for womanhood till time shall end
She stands the synonym for sorrowing love,
Anointing for love's burial. Who follows far,
Who looks and worships, but who comes not near,
Who breaks no precious alabaster box,
No spikenard brings, nor soft caressing coils
Of raven hair to bind his weary feet,—
But with sad, straining eyes and bleeding heart
Who follows, follows to love's Calvary.

#### THE ALABASTER BOX.

WEARIED, at daylight's close he sat at meat In Simon's house after the dust and heat, When all the multitude had passed to rest, Like crests of foam lost in the ocean's breast. But in the gloaming came a presence sweet—Almost ethereal—from the darkening street, And bending near, with reverent love she broke The alabaster box with one swift stroke.

A fragrance as of thousand lily blooms
In this most costly essence filled the rooms.
Anointing then his head with fond caress,
Down to his sandaled feet each shining tress
Fell soft in folds. Her lustrous shining bands,
Those bright magnetic and caressing strands,
Seemed made for Eastern lavishness of love
That meant no wrong but worshipful remove.

"Stay!" said the scornful voice of prudence, fain To crush all passion in relentless pain; "Stay, stay!—this costly ointment might be sold, And bring into our coffers untold gold. It might be kept and lavished on the poor, The palsied poor that beg from door to door."

The Master saw the tears, the hope elate, Would he too think the sacrifice too great? Too great for him but for the beggar small! Dear Lord, too great for thee, who gavest all? She thought of all his self-forgetfulness, His helpfulness to all in dire distress, Would he too look a frown and send her hence? Her beauteous eyes were full of penitence.

Nay, he rebuked the ever sordid mind And said with gentlest glance, so heavenly kind,

"Let her alone; this act of love for me Her sweet memorial shall ever be."

And then reminding those whose sordid aim Revealed itself as oft to-day the same ("The poor, the poor," to hide the poorer soul And hoard what they can gather, roll on roll),—

"She thought to help the One who loved the poor Far better than to give of her lone store. These ye have always with you, but your Lord Soon goeth hence, and she with sweetest word Hath done this for my burial—she alone." And then he blessed her, he, our sinless One.

Oh, woman! thy love-tribute paid to him Thrills through the ages its blest rapture hymn, And its acceptance brings us all with thee Within the arc of his humanity.

#### BETHANY.

WHEN Jesus came to Bethany
The doves moaned low in the olive tree;
Through the hollow heaven a hoarse wind ran,
Where the low clouds trooped like a caravan;
The hills lay heaped in gloom around,
And a dimness brooded along the ground.

The timid faces of flowers bent Low o'er the earth where his pathway went, And the grass bowed low to meet the sod Where the feet of the moody East wind trod, That gathered the dust of the way in its hand, And sowed it like grain along the land.

And down and around where the black rocks lay, The stream went by in its dull, blind way, Lipping the banks with a tremulous moan, Burdened with dead leaves over it strewn; Dark was its heart as a maid's that lies Of its light forlorn, and a fount of sighs.

There was gloom and trouble in Bethany When Jesus came with his company; With swarthy faces and dusky eyes, The Jews were gathered in mourning guise, And sat, and one and another spake Their comforting things for the sisters' sake.

And dark in the house sat the phantom of Death, Blighting the air with its earthy breath, Where a sister heart was a shattered cup, And another a deep well broken up; And heavy his presence sat that day As the stone that over the dead man lay.

For Lazarus, brother, and helper, and friend, Lay in his grave at the garden's end, The days of a good man's labors told, The mystic writing together rolled,—Life mused of her mortality When Jesus came to Bethany.

"Jesus said, Take ye away the stone.

". . . Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me,

"And I knew that thou hearest me always, but because of the people that stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

"And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

"And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him and let him go." When Jesus went from Bethany
Joy bloomed behind him like the May,
The beauty and the mystery
Of something heavenly brimmed the day.

The singing wind, the moving leaves,
The birds that boasted in their joy;
The sunlight glowing on the sheaves,
Like smiles of some heart-happy boy;

The day's calm gift of peace serene,
Broad o'er the ancient mountains lay,
Their court's grave round—their council scene
Was filled with light of holiday.

The sky—a deep blue Galilee—
Sent forth its fleets of changing cloud—
Fair sailors o'er how fair a sea!
Moved by the breeze as life-endowed.

And oh the gladness in the heart Of poor men in that little town! As if they saw the heavens dispart And a strong angel coming down,

With store of heaven-sent balm for sin, And all men's bitter want and woe, Freely dispensing all, to win Health and sane quiet here below. And voices touched of God were heard To praise him there at joyous height; And tongues to sing like morning's bird, Through the fair circle of her flight.

Oh from the roofs the gloom was shed,
As mountains shed their shades at morn,
And man went to his labor, led
By strength that left no hope forlorn.

And he whom death had straitly bound,

He walked and labored with them there;
Upon their dear accustomed round

His miracle-loosed feet did fare.

O gracious day born from afar, Of bright immortal memory; 'T was as the days of heaven are When Jesus went from Bethany.

O. C. A.

# MOUNT TABOR.

METHOUGHT I saw the chosen Three
Who walked so oft with Christ below,
Who saw in sad Gethsemane
Those crimson drops of woe—
That from their living lips I heard
The story of our risen Lord.

They talked to me of Tabor's steep;
How tenderly he led them there;
When weary, faint, they sank to sleep,
He knelt alone in prayer.
Then while they slept strange visions came,
They thought the mountain all aflame.

They waked, and saw, with wondering eyes,
What ne'er to other sight was given—
He held communion with the skies,
Bathed in the light of Heaven.
His face shone as the sun, and lo!
His raiment "glistened white as snow."

They told me of the Two who came
On swiftest wing, at Heaven's behest—

Elijah, who on cloud of flame,
Ascended to his rest;
And Moses, who on Horeb trod,
And "face to face" communed with God.

They told me of their wondering fear
When, pealing through the silent night,
Came sounds so strange to mortal ear,
From yonder world of light;
When God's own voice proclaimed his Son—
His Well Beloved, the Glorious One.

And then they ceased. "O stay!" I cried,
"O linger yet, ye favored Three,
And tell me more of him who died
On that dear Cross for me!
Tell me, what wondrous theme had they
Who came on such high embassy?"

"Wouldst know? They spake of his decease,
The woe, the pain of Calvary;
Yet on his brow the light of peace
Still radiant we could see;
That brow which sharpest thorns would bear,
That man a crown of life might wear!

"They spake of *love* too great and high,
Too deep and vast for us to know;
But ah! we knew that he must die,
And this was greatest woe;

We looked, and lo! the vision gone, Our Jesus stood with us alone!"

"And did ye still in him behold
The sunshine of the Father's love?
Was all that seemed of earthly mould
Still radiant from above?
And was it precious thus to be
Alone with such a Friend as he?"

I questioned, but no voice replied;
The answer to my *heart* was given;
My path of life was glorified
By this one glimpse of Heaven;
A light celestial round me shone
While I with Jesus stood alone.

J. O. S.

#### GETHSEMANE.

'T IS not with pity, O my Lord!
For thy great agony,
Mine eyes so oft o'erflow when fixed
On dark Gethsemane.

The lonely spot, the sleepless watch,
While watchers slept around,
The prayer, the awful sweat that fell
Like blood upon the ground,

Move not my pity, thou wert strong In thy divinity, Legions of glorious angels stood To bear thee company.

'T is pity for man's ruined state
That makes mine eyes o'erflow,—
The sin and bitter shame that brought
The Son of God so low.

Still keep my soul all pitiful
Mine eyes compassionate,
My heart of frailties warm and kind
For my frail fellows' fate.

But when thy strife, thy cross, my Lord,
My deepest spirit thrill,
Let me in wonder then bow down
And worship and be still!

And still remind me when I look
On dark Gethsemane
'T is thou that must be pitiful,—
We cannot pity thee.

O. C. A.

#### THE BETRAYAL.

I T angered me to see that wily knave,
So sleek and sanctimonious without,
A mine of deep hypocrisy within,
With those keen greedy jackals bartering there
As men for beeves trade in the common mart,
To sell the light and wisdom of the world
For a lean scrap of gain. It maddened me,
I say, to watch that reptile at his sport,—
Once trusted servant of the noblest lord
Man ever knew, now sunk to basest slave
And most contemptible, mocked by the men
Who wrung him out the price of innocent blood!

Being but a chartered idler in the land,
Bound down by no home duties, ties, or kin,
And privileged at will to come and go,
Observing that which drew me, I had seen
The man majestic in his journeyings,
Sometimes within the synagogues, and once
Beside the sea, amid a host that girt
This master of strange eloquence. I heard,
Amazed, that stream of discourse plough its way
Through soil of lives compacted down with sin,

Till the will heaved and trembled and went down, Uptorn and drowned by that deep flood of power.

I heard — though shaken not o'ercome — that tongue,

Sweeter than any bird's or angel's song
On earth or in the heavens, discourse of things
So near and natural to the heart of man.
All testified their truth; but to the mind
Ofttimes mysterious, heavenly and strange,
Mystic, impracticable; and I loved
The man—the more than man—for his brave truth,
A sword that cut and healed at one keen stroke.

So when I heard that traitor dealing there To sell that life, my soul stepped forth at once His champion and defender. How to thwart Those sinners in their game, and balk their end Became my instant thought. Cowards I deemed They needs must be, in secret so to plot, And hunt at night like kindlier beasts their prey. I judged them cowards on the spur of thought, And took betimes such means as we employ To frighten hinds and children. I assumed The spectre, that old terror, ever new, And wrapped my naked body in a robe Of white, to gleam a-sudden from the dark Of olive shades upon them at the height Of their coarse triumph, scatter them away Rolled one upon another in their fright,

Then snatch their innocent victim swift away To some close spot beyond their cognizance, Whence, after, he might pass and know no harm.

The sight the torches made among the trees,
Joyously tossing down the shadowy gorge
That cradled murmuring Cedron! Balls of fire
Rolled through a chasm of shade from side to side,
And always as I gazed, one quenched, and then
Flaming out wild and brilliant, like a star
Shot from amid a cloud; and stab, stab, stab,
The rays went like bright daggers through the
leaves.

Making a joyous pageant in the night All down the slope, o'er Cedron, and again Up the slow shadowy rise to Olivet.

'T was there the garden lay, thick-set with trees Of time-carved trunks, and wild storm-tortured limbs

Stiffened on high, from which broke forth the grace Of breathing foliage, the green deeps perfumed With wraiths of evening incense through and through.

This was the goal of the torches, this the fold Where lay that night that famous company John, Peter, and their comrades, on the earth, Drowsed with the poppy toil; where he their Lord With all a thousand inner wakeful eyes Watched—what wild coming shadows!

And I followed
Through the deep balmy night blown through with
breath

Of flowers from gardens swathed in revery,
Couched on those shelves that steeply overhung
The Cedron in his cradle murmuring low.
And down the path till plunged in double gloom
At the bottom, where the near stream foamed along
In darkness, and then upward by the path
That cleft the trees and straightened up the slope,
I passed, following the torches, till all came
To the garden and the moment and the scene.

I saw the torches like a golden snake
Draw in their glittering train, and shift and coil,
And stand a constellation. Then I turned,
Half circling them, and like a hunter, stole
From olive tree to olive, till I came
And saw where stood the Teacher 'mid his band
Of body-worn disciples dull with sleep
Prone on the grass, their couch in that wild place.

And while he stood and spake unto them there I heard from out the dimness such words come As "Rise and let us go." "Behold at hand Him who betrayeth me." And from the nest Of torches in the woods stole forth a creature, Cloaked, capped, and sandalled with sly secrecy, That halted oft and wavered, then slid on, As I have seen a cat come towards its prey, With velvet tread, and fixed magnetic gaze,

Incomparable in motion, pausing oft With lifted head, stretched neck, and quivering flanks,

Then lower and glide on. So came the beast— Judas—the deathless traitor towards his prev. And forth he came, and O humanity !-And out he crawled, and O man's soul the sight! O shameful sunken life of man !-- the kiss With which he met and hailed him! Then I saw. I witnessed, I beheld with living eyes That which 't was rumored had been, vet should be. But vainly heard by unanointed ears, Satan and God encounter on the earth-Meet in this world of men! God oped mine eyes-He gave me second sight in that great hour-For this deep revelation-Flash! then darkness Of human sight forever, as before. The mask of flesh seemed to be snatched away From those two forms: and there in hideousness Stood Satan all unveiled; and face to face With him, that disincarnate majesty Of light and truth and wisdom which is Christ. And they stood face to face within my sight, One knowing, penetrating all, deep seeing Beyond humanity, with port and eyes Immortal; and the other dark and vile, Anointed o'er with hypocritic gloze-In vain! deceiving not, but self-deceived. All ruin, ruin, ruinous, corrupt, Fast sinking down to worse!

'T was then my soul, Free-seeing, knew and recognized its lord, And knew and recognized its enemy, And clove unto the former with full zeal—My tamer, my sweet master! I have heard That some, beholding him aris'n to life Victorious from the grave-walls, have believed. But I, beholding him, self-knowing rise That hour to heavenly heights by sacrifice, With steps instructed, knowing to what he went And whither, all-foreseeing, hero—God,—My soul saw all in him, and I believed.

The rest do all men know. Mark's gospel says, How came they with their torches and their slaves And took him, he rebuking their rude haste, And led him from the garden and away Unto their masters, to be judged and doomed, While all his comrades fled into the night. Fearful, and left him as foretold. And I-Forgotten was the cause for which I came. Forgotten in the horror of that kiss, Forgotten in the keen repentant stab There dealt my soul. Forgotten in the light My soul received from that sweet sacrifice. My purpose, like a cup from out my hand Fell shattered, and its contents flowed abroad. One only thought and one desire I had, One only impulse blind—to follow him. And I did follow when the last of his

Had gone away and left him. I am he
Of whom Mark darkly says: "There followed him
A young man having girt about his body
A linen cloth, and whom the young men caught,
Whereat he fled away in nakedness,
Leaving the linen cloth within their grasp."

'T was not to give him aid I followed him,
'T was not in fear of death I fled from him;
I know not what it was, or how it came,
Save that it was his will to walk alone
That path too high for sons of men to tread,
Not being like him divine. So 't was his will
Working through this our weakness made us turn
And leave him, who yet lived to follow him
In his own way, by other friendlier paths,
Where'er he led, and always to the end.

O. C. A.

# BEFORE PILATE.

Persons: - Pilate, Pharisee, Citizen, Soldier, etc.

# Citizen.

LOOK! there he comes! See that majestic look!
He does not seem like one who hath been scourged

With the bare knout, and mocked with foolery Of the ironic sceptre, robe, and crown, As we beheld a little while ago.

By Cæsar! but I do admire the man!

#### Pharisee.

Art thou of his disciples? Look around: Where are they that did follow him of late? Gone, every one.—Thou art the bravest truly Of all his followers.

# Citizen.

I am not of them; Only I have the feeling to admire
A brave man when I see him. You are many
Who are his adversaries. You have power:
His friend were few and feeble and but human.
'T is piece and parcel of this time for you,
The strong, to mock and set at nought the weak,
Though he be the better man.

## Pharisee.

Sir, you are free—

Too free somewhat of speech. Tone down your thought,

Or give it less free range is my advice.

#### Citizen.

Spare your advice and threats; I am as you A citizen of this the Roman state And claim and hold as wide a latitude Of speech as you may, grumbling at your rulers.

### Soldier.

By Jove! what perfect spear-shafts are these doctors;

These wondrous uprights, downrights, thus-and-so's,

So stiff and smooth all round to a hair's breadth! I doubt they find this rough field of the world Quite flat enough to stand themselves upon! Lean this way your best ear, my citizen—You are a soldier in your heart and speech—By Venus, you are right about the man, This so-called King of the Jews!—here is a man A Roman can admire with all his heart, Clean, clear, unclouded in his speech, and firm To face the consequences of his speech. I marvel that he did not use the sword, 'T is in him too to wield it. Sir, if aught My orders should compel to do this day

Against such majesty, great Jove forgive; My heart is with the man.

# Fool.

And so is mine.

I love this man, and I love Cæsar too; Sure, 't is a mighty thing to be a king.

#### Priest.

Scribes, Pharisees, lords of the Sanhedrim,
Gather ye here around me now, and be
Ready in mass to raise our massive cry
Against him, if our governor should melt,
And counsel favor for the blasphemer!
If Pilate's weak in favor of this man,
He's also weak in favor of the Jews;
We'll draw his favor back again to us
In the last act, and clench it! How I hate him!—
Oh how I loathe yon pale impertinence!
We'll give our voice to crucify. All here
Unanimous? That's good. Hark! Pilate speaks.

# Pilate.

Listen, ye Jews. Here ye behold your king.

# Jews.

This man is not our king—Cæsar is king. Away with this one! Cæsar is our king.

# Citizen.

And yet is Cæsar kingly as this man?

#### Women.

Oh that we only had him for our king, How sweet 't would be to serve him!

#### Fool.

So say I.

I certainly would serve him night and day.

Give me the king that heals men when they're sick,

And feeds them when they 're hungry; he's the man,

He healed my cousin of a vile complaint, And my cousin he is poor. Give me this man.

# Scribe.

Fool's folly, cease! Thy tongue is an offence. What cares the king or God for your base body Or its diseases? Perish in your disease! Let soul and body die; but keep the law.

#### Citizen.

They think to silence all save their own voice.

#### Pilate.

Silence, ye people! Once more do I ask,
What evil hath this man done, that he should die?
I have chastised him: I will let him go.
There is no form of justice in your er,
Of "Crucify him," dinned into mine ear.

Jews.

No, no! Crucify him! Crucify him!

A Voice.

Yes. Crucify him !—He is innocent.

Second Voice.

Aye. Crucify him! It were infamy
For innocence to go free from such wild beasts
In this wild time.

# Priest.

Ho, there is treason here!
Can we not cause these grunters to be still?
Pilate repents again. O weak, weak, weak!
Fie on the waverer! Israel, draw around!
Cry the last cry we taught you ere we came,
'T will thunder like the law in Pilate's ears,
And bring his wandering senses back. Now all:
Hear, Governor, the people, their last plea!
This time give heed! If thou let this man go
Thou art not Cæsar's friend!

#### Woman.

See how he pales
Before their threats! Oh, what if they prevail,
And this fair lamb be given as a prey
To these dirk beasts, blind in their hearts and cruel!

#### Fool.

Nay, they shall never crucify my king! I'll whisper Pilate that he let him go. That would be brave.

#### Woman.

I even would thou couldst Rescue this just one. How sublime he looks, Standing in meekness, hearing all they say Against him, and yet uttering no word.

### Loud Voice.

I 've just arrived. What is the matter here? Is some one to be crucified, you say? I heard the cry. Why, crucify him then! I am all out of breath, but I 've a voice To raise for crucifixion. Who it is Or what he 's done, it matters not to me,—Crucify him! Crucify anybody, It matters not; excitement's what we want; We stagnate here in this Jerusalem For want of sport. Crucify him, I say!

#### Another Voice.

Let it be done, and with him all the world!
"T were good if all mankind were crucified,
And the last crucifiers stabbed or drowned;
Then would the world be empty as it was,
And innocent of this vile race of men.
All things are useless, life itself is vain;

We come from nothing, and for nothing stay A little while, and then to nothing go.
Where is the use, the reasonableness of life?

#### Pilate.

Will ye be silent there! Hear this my judgment: Take ye this man since ye will have it so, Bear ye the blame, for I am innocent—Behold I wash my hands before you all.

# Jews.

His blood be on us and upon our children! Now do we know thee Cæsar's friend and ours. Hail, worthy Pilate! Thou art Cæsar's friend!

#### Woman.

O blessed Lord! And is this possible?
O cruel world! What shall become of us!

#### Soldier.

Forthwith I shall be sick within my tent!

# Citizen.

Forthwith are many sick within their hearts, And sicker shall the world be in my view, Before the garment woven here to-day Shall be outworn! In Jove's view what a time And people! Hear ye this last word from me, Ye Jews,—Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, and all! There is a thing called justice in the earth, Justice that has its way or soon or late,

Mild like your prisoner if coming soon,
Wild like the last convulsion, coming late,
Making its way at last mid wreck and ruin.
And this same justice, it is of the gods.
Man may assist it. Standing in its way,
Down sinks in wreck his house, his state, his life.
Ye have this day in face of earth and heaven
Refused your man's assistance, turned your backs,
Nay, heaped your mount of passion in its path,
And cried, "We bide the issue": therefore watch,
For the flood cometh that shall take your souls.

#### Woman.

Oh shame, to lay their hands so rudely on him!

#### Fool.

It is; but kings feel not as other men.

#### Citizen.

Once more let me look on him ere he go! Am I confounded in my intellect? Who is the Judge here, who the prisoner? That nervous, anxious man with hiding looks, Upon you dais seated o'er the throng, With symbols of authority around? Is he in truth the Judge? or only dream He and the world in this strange session met That he is such? Or is it that large soul, Calm and untroubled, seeming to have chains Indeed upon him, but in look and mien Pronounceably a governor to command,

With power to quell all tumults, mould all wills,
And turn all wrong to right,—is he the Judge?
My eyes attest that Pilate is the Judge,
My soul declares he is the prisoner.
For from behind the gross form of this deed
Something there moves—I know not what—a light,
A shape, that does abide amid all this
Shifting, unstable substance, shines through it,
And testifies against it. Aye, there seems
A falseness, a perversion, in this scene,
Even as a dream presents things out of shape
And keeping, makes the substance seem the
shadow.

The shadow substance. I am nigh to think This scene a semblance only and not fact; I seem to see the fact in that sweet gleam Waiting behind to be made manifest When we shall wake at last unto ourselves, To-day to see existence from behind. To-morrow's sun may set us in its front And right perspective, and all things around In tottering instability survive. Another day ere long, we may behold Them firmly fixed on their ideal base, Not to be moved again. Oh in this world, How we do sleep such days out! but the gods They never sleep—this light may be of them, A herald of the morning, sweetest morn! Glad sunrise and bright dayspring from on high, All fresh with sunny vigor, bright and clear,

To summon us to gladness, when our eyes Shall see things as they are, our ears unstopped Hear all things first aright. Yea, and who knows, Ourselves be light and living in the light.

There goes to death one like a God on earth. Farewell, brave soul !—To-day man's wrath prevails,

But holier times shall see thee justified.

O. C. A.

# PILATE AND HEROD BECAME FRIENDS.

(Luke xxiii., 1-24.)

L O, what indignity to thee, O Christ!
And yet thou didst submit with kingly grace,
Their wavering mandates, sent from place to
place—

'T was in the steps of thy redemptive plan.

As heedless of the empty honors thrust
Upon thee, as of ridicule and shame,
Forgiving those who darted tongues of blame,
And those who weakly bowed to their "Ye must!"

What vacillating rulers, each at strife,
Involving realms in their relentless greed,
But sudden colleagues in that direful deed
That crowned the sorrows of thy sacred life.

O Pilate, what a name thou mightst have gained Through ages upon ages, hadst thou dared To crush their jealousy, their victim spared—Hadst held thy better impulse ere it waned.

But ever since the world began 't is true,
That weakness is with wickedness akin;
The bolt is drawn, and Evil enters in
And holds high revel with his deadly crew.

# Pilate and Iberod Became Friends. 85

The thought comes—whence I know not—reverently,

Did God need *Wrong* to put the topmost stone On his redemptive plan? Heaven's lofty throne Would be dishonored thus—it could not be.

That life with deeds so great, with years so few,
A life full bounded by its third decade,
Which year by year such wise fulfilment made,—
Was hell let loose to snap the thread in two?

Nay, nay; but fiends of Hell may work their will, 'T will be transmute in honor to his name.

How Pilate's story of unenvied fame

Hath sent through all the world its horror-thrill!

Angels or fiends, kings, beggars, potentates, In good or evil play their *natural* part, And Evil vies with Good in wonder's mart, And Evil's trumpet-tongue the tale relates.

Little recked they who such dread sentence passed Upon the unresisting Son of Man, That e'en their bitter wrath helped on the plan, As seeds are caught and driven before the blast.

How all the deep indignities he bore,
From hand of Wrong, from scourge and nail and
crown,

Have pierced the heart's deep wells as handed down—

Men grasped its meaning from the centuries' store.

Christ died for men, for all,—and had they learned To bend the ear and on his bidding wait,
Might not the Son of God, e'en at heaven's gate,
Have paid the ransom, nor the gift been spurned?

But then this wondrous life had waxed and waned Within the borders of far Galilee,
While with averted gaze men would not see
How much it meant for them, heaven-life regained.

But here the world stood still and gazed with fear On all that Evil wrought, and Nature's cry For this great wrong, ascending to the sky, Broke forth in bell-peals that the world might hear.

And so their evil deeds, though in the line
Of their own fiendish purpose, swiftly stirred
Men from lethargic sleep; Revenge was heard
To lift his voice and hail this King divine.

He would not seek Elijah's steeds of fire
With seraph guides and wingèd charioteers,
But that he might know all our human fears,
The path of anguish chose with stern desire.

He would not lift to heaven a speechless cry, In painless ransom, so poor heedless man, Had felt no thrill, blind fool since time began, 'Cept lightning-felled by love's intensity.

# Pilate and Berod Became Friends. 87

But when the fulness of the perfect time
Has ripened, how prophetic fingers mark
The hour, the instrument, and waft the spark
Of living fire through every distant clime.

Say not that God the cup of Wrong would fill, But that those evil minds on murder bent, Transmute, evolved beneficent intent— Their natural wrong was herald of his will;

And even their cry of hate, a trumpet-tongue
To echo down the ages, peal on peal.
Arresting, holding:—He who came to heal
Forgave them and his love around them flung.
J. O. S.

# "INASMUCH."

("Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye did it unto me.")

LOOK up! sad, disappointed soul, Borne down by weight of care. Didst thou not help a shuddering one Pursued by dark despair?

His feet rushed to the brink of death On self-destruction bent, When lo, thy voice of tenderness Swift baffled his intent.

Christ's "Inasmuch" may not be heard
'Mid earthly strife and din,
But gates of heaven shall open wide
For thee to enter in.

J. O. S.

# "BEHOLD THY SON!"

("When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.")

CAN heaven itself blot out the agony
Of that one hour,—to see him bending down
Beneath his cross, then scourge and nail and
crown,

Mary—did not each cruel nail pierce thee?

O God! the mother-heart within me cries, While supplicating hands are lifted high: Could heaven's own angels know this agony? Nay, birth- and death-pangs are for lower skies.

But 't was our God-man, all his earth-work done, While stung with pain and faint in death's embrace,

Who saw the woe on that beloved face, And spake those tender words,—" Behold thy son!"

Was this too in thy sacrificial plan?

What pains or pangs of earth can e'er compare

With those fierce throes which lay the spirit

bare?

And thou didst feel her grief, O Son of Man!
J. O. S.

# ELOI, ELOI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?

THE piercèd hands, the tortures of the cross,
The thrust of spear, of thorn-spikes,—all the
loss

Of life-blood flowing from the riven heart,— All this before that cry was flung across

The wide crevasse which earth and heaven divides,

All this ere that stern angel who bestrides The tempest-cloud had stooped his heart to still Whose fearful shadow at the grave abides.

Could Heaven have heard that rending *Eloi*, More piercing than the last expiring cry, And not have interfered with stern command To calm and quell his mental agony?

But 't was the God within himself who planned This sacrifice and his own thought which spanned The bridge of dread and built the shining way Where through all ages faltering feet may stand.

That cry the human longing of his soul For spirit succor when the direful whole Of physical and mental strain and stress First overwhelmed him with its billows-roll, And when the throng, to their rude natures true, Harsh epithets and taunting words flung through The startled air, how fell that world-held prayer,—"Father, forgive!... They know not what they do!"

But oh the self-forgetfulness of One Who, midst his agony, with tenderest tone, Spake to the weeping Mary 'mong the throng, And bade his follower take her as his own!

And oh the power of him who could decree When one who prayed, "O Lord, remember me," Could answering say that his blood-ransomed soul That day with him in paradise should be!

And what the power which rent the vail in twain, That bade earth tremble with her horror-pain, That robbed the graves of their anointed dead, And made them quick and animate again!

J. O. S.

# THE CRUCIFIED.

I SAW a rugged cross upraised, And him who perished there Amid the souls who stood and gazed In triumph or despair.

I saw the sacred blood that dropped From feet and hands and head; Pierced wild and far that bitter cry When his torn spirit fled.

Then came a sound, it rose afar,
And rolled like thunder near,
Beneath me rose the earth and reeled
As a smitten steed doth rear,

And sunk with many a trembling throe And laboring inward groan; Fierce blasts smote on me from below, Like a steed's hot breath outblown.

And darkness like the doors of death
Shut round upon the day;
And there were cries and flight as when
The sword runs forth to slay.

And shapes in white amid the night Went hurrying here and there; One stooped and peered into my face With strange and searching stare.

'T was all a dream, yet it returns,
Alike the scene, the place,
It comes and grows upon my thought
Amid the day's broad space.

The place, the scene, the same, but changed,
The victim raised in air,—
Yea, changed,—for gazing on his face
I see my own face there.

Oh raised amid the solemn scene,

My form, my face, appear;

Mine the torn brow, the hands, the side,

The thorn, the nail, the spear!

It stays nor will be otherwise,
Nor ever else can be;
My frame, my heart of sin it was
That perished on the tree.

O King, who conquered my strong sin
On that all-fearful day,
What may thy grateful freeman bring
Who cannot aught repay?
Thy faithful knight through dark and bright,
I'll hear thee and obey.
O. C. A.

# THE WEEPING WILLOW OF GETHSEMANE.

O willow, why forever weep
As one who mourns a deathless wrong!
What hidden woe can lie so deep,
What utter grief can last so long?

E. A. A.

OH, mine is not a hidden woe,
All nature doth its memories keep,
These very flowers my branches sweep,
The burden of my sorrow know!

The violet drooped her eyes of blue, Abashed such deeds of wrong to see; My lily-browed anemone Blushed, all her snow-white petals through.

You ask me why? Winds, whisper low.
Hide, stars, beneath your veils of cloud,
Night's densest robes must close enshroud,
Ere mortal ears may hear my woe.

One eve within a lone retreat Of sacred, sad Gethsemane,

## The Weeping Willow of Gethsemane. 95

The "Man of Sorrows" came to me And rested, weary, at my feet.

Oh, ne'er did burdened spirit lay,
Before his God such weight of woe.
The crimson life-drops from his brow
No dews of night could wash away.

Some deep, some hidden grief he bore; The livelong night he waited there, And breathed such agonies of prayer As ne'er did human lips before.

I asked the stars,—but no reply.

The full moon hid her face from sight.

"Tell me, oh tell me, winds of night,

Why this unwonted agony?"

Then ZEPHYR'S deep, low voice replied:
"Divinity on earth has trod.
All nature bows before her God,
But Man his Maker has denied!

"The sorrow of a world is there.

A world whose sins he would atone,
Each ill the human heart hath known,
That sinking spirit hath to bear."

Oh, then my branches downward swept,
They towered to yonder heaven no more;
All night they fanned him o'er and o'er,
All night their weeping vigils kept.

Their loving touch perchance had healed, So near to nature's soul he came;— But fresh indignities of shame These very boughs were made to yield.

By man, in whom no love awoke,
From these the cruel scourge was made,
Which on that holy flesh was laid,
With mortal, blood-compelling stroke!

Now, touch my branches, twine thy brow, A wreath of bay thou wilt not gain, They may not bring surcease of pain, That could such mortal pain bestow.

"The winds may woo, the roses wait,"
Still must I droop, and still despair;
Kind nature ne'er will bid me wear,
The glories of my former state.

### "CHRIST IS RISEN!"

BEFORE the earliest dawn
They came, with hearts bereft and lone,
While nature, sad in sympathy,
Had hushed, the while, each joyous tone,
Each voice of melody.

The silent, watchful stars,

Fast fading in the distant blue,

Looked down, it seemed, with mournful eyes,

As dawn came softly melting through

Those mild Judean skies:

But to those sorrowing hearts

No dawning glory pierced the gloom;

They saw but darkening clouds that prest
In densest form around the tomb,

Where he was laid to rest.

Oft had he told them all,
And they had heard him day by day,
Yet had they hoped, scarce knowing why,
That from such power and majesty
E'en Death would shrink away.

But now of hope bereft,
They sought that rocky grave again,
Their last sad gifts of sorrow bringing;
Nor heard the angels even then,
Their songs of rapture singing.

But lo! what sudden change!

The tomb once sealed is open wide!

The stone which at its portal lay,

By unseen hands is rolled aside,

While angels guard the way!

Now, thrilled with sudden fear,
They wonder where their Lord is laid:
"Oh, tell us where!" they weeping cried;
"Why seek the living 'mong the dead?"
The angel's voice replied.

Hope sought their hearts again,
And through the heavy clouds there came
A ray of Heaven's effulgence beaming,
And down the cheeks which grief had paled,
Swift tears of joy were streaming.

"But where, oh tell us where!
Is he a spirit unrevealed
To human eyes? Or can we know,
The voice, the look, the tone that healed
The turbulence of woe?"

"Your Jesus, still the same—Behold his empty resting-place!

He lives who was 'The Crucified.' And ye shall see him face to face," Again the voice replied.

Then as they swiftly ran

To make the wondrous tidings known
Behold! He met them—still the same:
His blessèd voice, and his alone,
Spake each familiar name!

Dear Jesus, when we seek
With breaking hearts thine empty tomb,
And faith is weak, and hopes are blighted,
May Thy loved voice dispel the gloom,
Speak peace to souls benighted.

And may that hallowed grave
Be still to us a pledge of life,
And while we linger by its portal,
Its rocky walls with hopes be rife—
Sweet hopes of joys immortal.

## THE JOURNEY TO EMMAUS.

WE read of friendships on the lower plane
Of two and two, where there is much to gain
Of nature's sweet accord between two hearts
Which seem but half a whole when distance parts.
But these are earthy, selfish, and prefer
That all the world should to them minister
And not they to the world, for pain's surcease,
But that its every realm should bring them peace.
Not such the friendship of the loyal three
Who walked together forth from Galilee;
And with that tenderness of tone that breaks
In sobs but half suppressed, and echo wakes
In all the hearts that hear, until they kneel
At the same shrine and threefold anguish feel.

Such are the friendships of the upland heights, Of heaven itself where no corruption blights; Nor can there be such love beneath the skies As that which binds by love's great sacrifice.

They walked along with meditative gait
And told the stranger all their sorrow's weight.
Had he not come their nation to redeem
From earthly bondage? but their glorious dream

Was buried now with him in Joseph's tomb,
And now the whole wide earth held naught but
gloom,
For they had lost him whom their souls adored,

For they had lost him whom their souls adored, Their prophet, priest, their own beloved Lord.

They told him of that agonizing pain, Of midnight gloom that shadowed all the plain, The awful rending of the temple's vail, The ghastly risen dead with faces pale,—But all as nothing to that anguished cry, That suffering, pathetic *Eloi*.

That horror from a spent vitality—"Oh why, my God, hast thou forsaken me?"

They wept again as lovingly they thought
Of that erstwhile unblemished body sought
By one who loved him, and most tenderly
In snow-white linen wrapped and laid away;—
Then looking up they saw the stranger's tear,
That told his sympathy with all their fear.

"Art thou a stranger then in this great realm And hast not heard its griefs that overwhelm?"

Then did this wondrous friend so kind so wise, Expound the word so that they ceased their sighs, And hung upon his speech as if entranced, Nor ever dreamed as on their steps advanced That this was their belovèd Master, risen, And only staying from his place in heaven To comfort them as he had done before In spiritual converse yet once more.

He told them not to mourn their Master's death (This earthly life was but a passing breath)
As those who have no hope, for it was meet
That one should die to win the heavenly seat.

They loved the stranger guest and sore constrained

That he should stay with them till day had waned, And loyal women, too, so warmly prayed
That he should sit with them within the shade—
The women who had found the empty tomb
And angel watchers deep within the gloom.

He at their bidding waited, when, behold!
Their eyes were oped to see—oh, joy untold!—
Their risen Lord, in dear familiar guise,
With all the old-time love-light in his eyes.

Then oh, what tempered joy as came the gleam Of swift remembrance;—but the scar, the seam The piercing of the nails, while plainly there The cruel crown-mark on the forehead bare!

They wept for joy, and trembling sorrow too, Because, still superhuman to their view, They could not clasp him as in earthly state,— His "Touch me not" subdued their hope elate; And in the very act of breaking bread, He vanished and the "viewless vision" sped.

This, then, their wondrous theme, their faltering strain,

On trembling wings that rose and fell again, As clasping loyal hands they said in turn,—
"Did not our sorrowing hearts within us burn"
When first he pointed out so tender, wise,
That God had blessed the willing sacrifice?
And how our very souls were thrilled to-day
When he was talking with us by the way!

#### THE ASCENSION.

I.

THE sun had touched the crown of Olivet
And eastward all the cloud towers were
aflame,

When with alert and eager footsteps came
That faithful band, their Master with them yet.
Their hearts were buoyant with expectancy.—
He who had conquered Death,—might he not stay

In his own realm,—of Death no more the prey,
Or vest them here with immortality?
Eyes still were wet with some remembered word;
That threnody of longing born of pain:
The "Lovest thou me?" again and yet again,
The thrice-told answer,—"Yea, thou knowest,
Lord."

Though on, still on, to Bethany he led, He would not leave them here unshepherded.

II.

But something held them silent and afraid,— They dared not even touch his garment's hem. Was he a God? Oh, human still to them, For there the marks which nail and thorn had made!

But some benign withdrawal made them feel
That there had been a subtle inward change
They could not fathom, far beyond the range
Of their earth limitations, strange, but real.
He lifted up his hands and blessed them there,
And then they knew! For with anointed eyes
They looked on God, on his world-sacrifice.
They knelt upon the sod in burning prayer,
By that strong waiting spirit soothed and quelled,
Still more their raptured hearts were love-impelled.

#### III.

Lo, Heaven has opened to their fervent gaze! Cloud forms appear and drift athwart the skies,—Bright cumulus chariots with their embassies,—While, rapt and lost in wonder and amaze, The kneeling band in speechless wonder wait, Prostrate with adoration, while they see To spirit changed from corporeity His form, cloud-wrapped, far speeding to Heaven's gate.

For him are changed the steadfast laws of earth—By spiritual gravitation drawn
Upward and onward to the gates of dawn,
Still upward where pure spirit has its birth.
Earth voices blending with the heavenly strain,
Which tells of souls blood-bought through Calvary's pain.

IV.

Two angels came with reassuring speech.—
Didst thou come, Gabriel? Thou,—to earth once
more

To tell that his redemptive work was o'er?

Didst bring One with thee, their bowed hearts to reach?

(For there were two.) Why may we not believe The One who came to Mary at his birth Should seek her, now that he had passed from earth,

And tenderly her sorrowing heart relieve.
"Weep not." "Fear not,"—Rejoice for evermore!

For he will yet return, all clothed in light,
As ye have seen him pass from out your sight.
"Once more I say, Rejoice!" Your tears are
o'er.

Can he forget his own? Nay, trust his grace, For he hath borne the heart-woes of the race.



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